

**Public Health Committee  
Public Hearing  
March 5, 2007**

**Testimony of Louise Giardina, RN  
Administrator, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care of Fairfield**

My name is Louise Giardina. I am a registered nurse, and I am here this morning to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 7193 which recognizes a state regulatory scheme for hospice-only providers in the State of Connecticut.

VITAS Innovative Hospice Care has been serving patients in the Fairfield area for approximately three years. We have cared for approximately 375 patients. We reach out to patients in many care settings, home, nursing home, and assisted living facilities, where ever they reside. Our patients tend to represent a more diverse population with approximately 10% African Americans and 6% Hispanic. Patients receive visits from our full time interdisciplinary team members, including nurses, chaplains, social worker, nurses aides, and physicians in their homes, working together to assure the patient's goals of care are met. Often our patients' plans of care require nearly daily support from our caregiver team. Indeed, based on January '07 data, our team members made an average of seven visits per patient per week, assuring daily contact to make sure that interventions change as conditions change for this special need patient. Hospice services are available for any patient with a life limiting illness, and we care for patients with a many different end stage diseases, and with about 30% cancer-related. We have also cared for cardiac, dementia, neurological disorders, such as ALS, and lung disease patients. Patients with no payor source are not denied care based on ability to pay. Because of our commitment to access for all patients who are appropriate for services, we have provided about \$650,000 worth of unfunded care in the community. We thank you for the opportunity to speak today before the Committee, and I am glad to answer any questions you might have at this time.